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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2005

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BRIEFING

Erdogan Addresses AKP Group on US Visit: On Tuesday, Prime
Minister Tayyip Erdogan told the ruling AK Party group that
his government has not been pursuing a policy that would
make Turkey 'bow' before other countries. 'My five-day
working visit to the United States last week was very
productive and significant, not only in terms of the
historical ties between the two allies, but also in terms of
discussing regional problems and stressing our joint
perspectives. Our alliance with the US is not only a
military one, but one of economic and strategic
significance,' Erdogan said. He added that during meetings
with US Congress leaders Bill Frist and Harry Reid, Senator
Frist defined Turkey as a 'loyal and reliable ally.'
'Senator Frist called on the US Administration to carry out
a more active fight against the terrorist PKK,' Erdogan
noted. Erdogan said that both President Bush and UN
Secretary General Annan thanked Turkey and the Turkish

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Cypriots for showing a will to achieve a settlement in
Cyprus at last year's referendum on the Annan Plan. Erdogan
thanked the US Congressmen who had visited north Cyprus
before his trip to the US, and added that while he was in
the US, he urged the American side to initiate direct
flights between Turkish Cyprus and Washington. Erdogan also
added that in talks with US officials, he had the
opportunity to explain Turkey's plans, highlight its
progress in democratization, its economic possibilities, and
its EU aspirations.

Erdogan on US, Iraq, Syria, Armenia: Prime Minister Tayyip
Erdogan told the all-news channel NTV on Tuesday that Turkey
will continue cooperating with the United States within a
framework of partnership. Syria will not cause a problem in
Turkey-US relations, according to Erdogan: 'A new term has
started in relations with Syria now that Bashar al-Assad is
in power. We are exchanging views on democracy, the fight
against global terrorism, human rights, the rule of law, and
the expansion of freedom. We are also exchanging
intelligence. It will take some time to have better

relations with Syria,' Erdogan said. 'The Sezer-Assad meetings have been helpful,' Erdogan said, pointing out that the Syrians pulled out of Lebanon following the Turkish President's visit to Damascus in April. Erdogan noted that the Turkish government is supporting coalition forces in Iraq, adding that some 5,000 trucks go into and out of Iraq every day carrying food, medicine, water, and oil. Erdogan added that Incirlik Airbase continued to provide logistical support. He stressed that Turkey expected action and cooperation from its allies in the fight against the PKK. Erdogan also pointed out that to date, Turkey has hosted eight international summits on Iraq. Erdogan called on Yerevan to examine documents in the Turkish archives on the alleged massacre of Armenians by Ottomans during World War I. 'All the documents we have disprove the theses put forth by the Armenian diaspora,' he claimed, adding that Turkey had given permission for charter flights between Istanbul and Yerevan. Erdogan also said that renovation work has started on the Armenian church on Akdamar Island in Lake Van. The Turkish Prime Minister noted that on July 3, he will attend the opening of construction on a natural gas pipeline that will extend from Karacabey in Turkey's Thrace region to Greece.

AKP Lawmaker Compares Bush, Saddam: Cavit Torun, a lawmaker from the ruling AK Party, said in a meeting on Tuesday with representatives of the German Protestant Church that Turkey has in the past extended support to the victims of Saddam Hussein's tyranny. 'Today,' he continued, 'those Iraqis who were fleeing the tyranny of Saddam are fleeing the tyranny of the United States. Tyranny never changes, no matter if its name is Saddam Hussein or George Bush,' Torun said. Papers comment that Torun's statement has put PM Erdogan in a difficult position, and predicted that Torun's words will 'infuriate' Washington.

US, Turkey Sign Agreement on Non-Proliferation Cooperation: Several dailies report that Ambassador Edelman and Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Ali Tuygan signed an agreement yesterday to cooperate in efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related technologies. "Sabah" described the agreement as 'accelerating the pace' of US-Turkish cooperation following PM Erdogan's recent meeting with President Bush in Washington.

Erdogan Visits Lebanon: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan traveled to Lebanon on Wednesday to open the 11th Arab Economic Forum in Beirut. Papers expect Erdogan to urge the Arab world to undertake democratic reforms and integrate with the international community. Erdogan will tell the Arabs that Turkey has removed domestic obstacles to the flow of foreign capital, and will discuss possibilities for joint investments in third countries. "Cumhuriyet" speculates that Washington believes the Erdogan government's policy of rapprochement with Damascus - and his state visit to the pro-Syrian regime in Lebanon - are inconsistent with international efforts to isolate Syria.

Erdogan, Gul React to Headscarf Ban at University: Prime Minister Erdogan said he is ready to hold a referendum on whether to allow women in Islamic-style headscarves to enter public places. Erdogan was reacting to news that mothers of students were barred from attending graduation ceremonies at Ataturk University in Turkey's eastern province of Erzurum because they wear headscarves. Foreign Minister Gul said his government would do something to remove such a 'shameful' practice in Turkey.

Erdogan Meets Soros: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan met Tuesday with a delegation from the International Crisis Group (ICG) led by US financier George Soros. The delegation handed the Prime Minister a draft ICG report on Cyprus. Erdogan said they discussed Iraq, Syria, and the Middle East with the group, and praised the ICG for supporting the Turkish position on the Cyprus issue. Soros and his delegation praised Turkey's 'constructive' stance in regional crises, and voiced interest in further cooperation, "Zaman" reports. Former US Ambassador Morton Abramowitz also attended the meeting.

Turkey Condemns Suicide Attack in Kirkuk: Turkey condemned the suicide attack in the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk that killed at least 22 people on Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry (MFA) said in a statement yesterday. MFA strongly condemned all attacks on civilians in the past few weeks in Iraq, and said Turkey would continue to provide health care and assistance to victims of terror.

Turkey-US Cooperation in Iraq: Dailies cite the British "Jane's Defense Weekly" (JDW) as reporting that the Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS), General Ilker Basbug, said at the annual conference on US-Turkey ties in Washington earlier this month that Turkey is planning to host 30 Iraqi military officers for training. Major General Cengiz Arslan, TGS director of strategy and planning, said

Turkey is in discussions with the US about either expanding the Habur border gate or adding a second crossing nearby. Turkey prefers the latter solution, Arslan said. `This is under discussion among Iraq, Turkey, and the US, but our main interlocutor is the US,' Arslan told JDW.

Talat: Turkey Won't Open Ports to Greek Cypriot Vessels: Turkish Cypriot `President' Mehmet Ali Talat said on Tuesday that it was not possible for Turkey to open its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels while Nicosia's boycott on Turkish Cypriot ports and airports is still in effect. Talat said the upcoming signing of an additional protocol to extend Turkey's Customs Union agreement to new EU members, including Cyprus, does not mean that Turkey will open its ports. Talat also said the Turkish Cypriots have launched a diplomatic initiative against Russia for blocking its nationals from visiting the northern part of the divided island.

Draft Minority Foundations Bill `Disappointing': The European Union is closely monitoring a draft law on religious foundations currently under discussion in the parliament, "Radikal" reports. The bill includes provisions for the return of properties previously seized by the Turkish state from non-Muslim minority foundations in Turkey. The draft contains no provisions for easing the transfer of such properties to third persons, "Radikal" notes, and reports Foreign Ministry (MFA) officials as warning that if enacted in its present form, Ankara may have to pay heavy compensations to minority foundations applying to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in lawsuits against Turkey.

EDITORIAL OPINION: EU Summit

"The EU Summit"

Kamuran Ozbir wrote in the nationalist "Ortadogu" (6/15): "The rejection of the European Constitution by two founding members of the EU has effectively terminated efforts to reorganize the fundamental structure of the Union. The current legal basis for the EU, as defined by the Nice Treaty in 2001, been turned upside-down. It is now obvious that the concept of Europe for the French and the Germans is no different than for the other member nations. In this new period, Turkey will still be treated as a member-to-be. But Russia should eventually be given European status as well. . Turkey, on the other hand, still suffers from a lack of knowledge about EU-related issues. Unfortunately, this ignorance is perpetuated by the Turkish media. Some opinions expressed in the media are based on wrong information. These incorrect assumptions have led some to claim that the EU will never ever accept Turkey as a member."

"Enlargement Becomes Highly Difficult"

Tamer Korkmaz noted in the Islamist oriented-intellectual "Zaman" (6/15): "The EU summit will convene in an effort to heal the serious wounds resulting from the referenda in France and the Netherlands. The summit will be a platform to discuss the future of the EU constitution, which many believe is already dead. . Following the referenda, the enlargement process of the EU has also been put at serious risk. The initial sign of this has already been seen, as the EU foreign ministers decided to delete the reference to enlargement from the final communiqué. That means that, for the first time, a summit of EU member countries does not have the enlargement issue on its agenda. The current approach, expressed in the EU foreign ministers meeting, shows that from now on enlargement of the Union will be highly difficult, if not almost impossible."

"A Summit to Determine the European Union's Future"

Sami Kohen opined in the main stream daily "Milliyet" (6/15): "EU leaders will discuss various problems at their summit in Brussels tomorrow. Europe's identity crisis will be at the top of the agenda. No efforts will be exerted at the summit to revive the constitution. As a result of the recent referenda, the members will seek a new arrangement in a direction more in line with the inclinations of the European public. This is not an easy issue, and cannot be solved within two days. Considering that the member countries worked for five years to develop the EU constitution, this project will need much longer to be completed and implemented. The work done on the constitution was mainly a loss of time for the EU, but at least a sound analysis of the referenda results will point the EU to a more viable path. The Turkish public is interested only in the impact of these analyses on Turkey's EU membership process and the Cyprus issue. Prior to the summit, the EU Council of Ministers decided to start negotiations with Turkey as was decided at the December 17 summit. But it is not clear how much interest EU officials will show in the Cyprus issue while they are dealing with the vital questions that will determine the Union's future."

